

CLAIM LISTING

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CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

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(b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

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(c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond to an increase in commercial risk;

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(d) through prior arrangements with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

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(f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(g) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 2. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation
of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 3. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- 15
- (1) a local area network;
 - (2) a wide area network;
 - (3) a cable system;
 - (4) an internet communication system; and
 - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

4. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which
may be accessed through the Internet.

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5 5. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

10 6. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 1
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

15 7. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
personal use.

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20 8. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1
wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said
articles of manufacture for resale; and

25 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

30 9. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1,
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of
article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities
available, and a delivery date.

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10. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

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- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

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11. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

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12. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 13. (Amended once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account an increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

15 14. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 15. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

25 16. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

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5 17. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 18. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

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15 19. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

5 20. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

B 20 (d) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to negotiate a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

25 (f) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;

30 (g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond to an increase in commercial risk;


(h) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said

5 selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account an increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a change in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(i) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

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 (j) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture

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(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 21. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20,
wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass
presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 22. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

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- (1) a local area network;
 - (2) a wide area network;
 - (3) a cable system;
 - (4) an internet communication system; and
 - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.


20 23. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may
be accessed through the Internet.

25 24. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim
20, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers
that are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially
responsible to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 25. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 20
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 26. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 27. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:


15 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

20 28. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

5 29. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20,
wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of
(a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a
plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 30. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,
wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
(2) a non-perishable article;
(3) a processed, perishable article;
25 (4) a processed commodity.

30 31. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which
are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at
a plurality of consumption locations.

5 32. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (f) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones
to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a
general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced,
wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally
decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

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15 33. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of
cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 34. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33,
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

25 35. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33,
wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits,
receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in
proposed articles of
manufacture.

30 36. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in
making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

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5 37. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 38. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

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5 39. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing an virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity;

15 (c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

20 (d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

25 (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture, in the form of a conditional offer each of which is binding upon said plurality of manufacturers if an aggregate minimum number of orders is obtained in a predetermined amount of time ;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through said virtual exchange;

- 5 (g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;
- 10 (h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing
- 15 price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward early commercial commitments and to reduce commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers;
- 20 (i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price;
- 25 (j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones in order to meet said aggregate minimum number of orders for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and
- 30 ~~(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.~~

(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 40. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of
said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 41. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:


(1) a local area network;

(2) a wide area network;

(3) a cable system;

15 (4) an internet communication system; and

(5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

 20 42. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an internet site which may
be accessed through the Internet.

25 43. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that
are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a
commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 44. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 39
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.


5 45. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 46. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

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(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.


20 47. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

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5 48. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 49. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
(2) a non-perishable article;
25 (3) a processed, perishable article;
(4) a processed commodity.

30 50. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 51. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones
to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a
general increase in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said
selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are
experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding
incrementally decreasing discount in price to said plurality of potential purchasers to
15 encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

20 52. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,
wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a
marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which
comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

25 53. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

30 54. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,
wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand
research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality
of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

- 5 55. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized by said plurality of manufacturers in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.
- 10 56. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.


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5 57. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

(c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying at least one pricing milestone in each of (1) a manufacturing
15 phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond to an increase in commercial risk;


20 (d) determining a separate price for each pricing milestone to establish an increasing price for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments relative to a production cycle for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

25 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said pricing milestones with said separate price;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(g) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 58. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation
of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 59. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 58,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- 15 (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 60. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 58,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which
may be accessed through the Internet.

25 61. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 62. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 57,
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 63. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 64. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and


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(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

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65. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a delivery date.

5 66. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.
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20 67. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
(2) a non-perishable article;
25 (3) a processed, perishable article;
(4) a processed commodity.

68. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which
30 are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 69. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (d) determining a separate price for each of said pricing milestones to
establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality
of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account an increase in
said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of
increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount
in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

15 70. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57,
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of
cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 71. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 70,
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.


25 72. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 70,
wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits,
receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in
proposed articles of manufacture.

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5 73. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized
in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 74. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,
wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to
potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make
decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

15 75. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided
to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from
potential manufacturers.



5 76. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing an virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity;

15 (c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

20 (d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

25 (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture, in the form of a conditional offer which obligates each of said plurality of manufacturers to produce and sell a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture at a plurality of predetermined production lot cycle milestone prices provided that an aggregate
30 minimum number of orders is received through said virtual exchange in advance of occurrence of each particular production lot cycle milestone;

(f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a

5 plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through said virtual exchange;

(g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of production lot cycle milestone prices in at least one
10 of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

(h) through prior arrangements between said trusted intermediary entity and said plurality of manufacturers, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of
15 production lot cycle milestone prices to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said production lot cycle milestone milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to said plurality of
20 potential purchasers to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to minimize commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers;

(i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of
25 potential purchasers at each of said plurality of production lot cycle milestone prices with said separate price; and

(j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers
30 and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said production lot cycle milestone prices and thereby exceed said aggregated minimum number of orders for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture and triggering said conditional offer .

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77. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 78. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:


(1) a local area network;

(2) a wide area network;

15 (3) a cable system;

(4) an internet communication system; and

(5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.


20 79. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

80. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 76 wherein
25 said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

81. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76 wherein
30 said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

5 82. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

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(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

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83. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

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84. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

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- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

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85. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

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86. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

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87. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

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(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a general change in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally changing price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

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5 88. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 89. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 88, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

15 90. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 88, wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

B'

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5 91. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost, or opportunity:

B' (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;

20 (2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

(4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

(6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;

25 (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;

(8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and

(9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture;

30 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing in price to encourage

5 and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

15 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and


20 (g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area.

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5 92. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 93. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 92, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:


- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

 20 94. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 92, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

25 95. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

5 96. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 91
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or
10 delivery components of landed costs.

97. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
15 personal use.

 98. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91
further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

- 20 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and
(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

25 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to
make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part
through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

5 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

99. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of
10 article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

100. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery
15 from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

101. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption
20 locations.

102. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said
30 commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

- 5 103. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.
- 10 104. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 93, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.
- 15 105. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 104, further comprising:
- B' (h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture; and
- 20 (i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.
- 25 106. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 104, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 107. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 105, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 108. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 105, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

15 109 (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 103, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically.

20

5 110. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

(d) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in at least one of the following respects:

20 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area;

25 (2) said potential purchasers are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture; and

(3) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.


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(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;

(f) utilizing said trusted intermediary to arrange a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

10 (g) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;

15 (h) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain milestones, which correspond to a change in commercial risk, cost or opportunity

- 
- (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
 - 20 (3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
 - 25 (8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
 - (9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

30 (i) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing

5 entities;

(j) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

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(k) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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5 111. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
wherein said electronic communication system allows controlled and password
protected access to said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 112. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

(1) a local area network;

(2) a wide area network;

(3) a cable system;

15 (4) an internet communication system; and

(5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

B' 113. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may
20 be accessed through the Internet.

5 114. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that
are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture and as satisfying one of
the following additional conditions:

10 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic
delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture
economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of
scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic
15 delivery area;

(2) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to
minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

20 115. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 110
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

25 116. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
personal use.

5 117. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
further comprising:

(l) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

15 (m) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order
to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in
part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

B' 20 (n) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the
freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 118. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted
intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at
least a product specification, quantities available, projected delivery date, and
region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

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5 119. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110,
wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- 10 (4) a processed commodity.

120. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which
are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at
15 a plurality of consumption locations, and wherein said articles of manufacture are
manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation
sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which
are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

B'
20 121. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

- (i) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones
to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account
25 changes in said commercial risk, cost, opportunity as said pricing milestones
are experienced, wherein said series of different, discrete prices provide a
corresponding incrementally changes in price to encourage and reward time
commercial commitments.

5 122. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 123. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

15 124. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 123, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

B' 20 125. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 124, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 126. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 125, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 127. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 126,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to
potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential
manufacturers.

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B'

5 128. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

B' 20 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;

(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;

25 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to encourage and
30 reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said

5 selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

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(f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area.

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129. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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130. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

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131. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 129, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.


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132. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

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5 133. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 128
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or
10 delivery components of landed costs.

 15 134. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
personal use.

5 135. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128 further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

15 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and


(i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 136. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

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5 137. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,
wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery
from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential
purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational
constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight
10 haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

 138. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or
consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from
15 said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption
locations.


139. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

20 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to
establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of
articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said
commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced,
wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally
25 changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

140. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of
30 cascading graphical user interfaces.

5 141. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 140, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

10 142. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 140, further comprising:

 (h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture; and

(i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.

20 143. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 142, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 144. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 143, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 145. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 144,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided
to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from
potential manufacturers.

10 146. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 143,
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to
determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a
sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles
of manufacture economically.


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5 147. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

 (d) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in at least one of the following respects:

20 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area;

25 (2) said potential purchasers are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture; and

(3) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

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(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(f) utilizing said trusted intermediary to arrange a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

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(g) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;

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(h) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain milestones, which correspond to a change in commercial risk, cost or opportunity

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- (1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;

25

(i) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(j) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at

5 each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

(k) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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5 148. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system allows controlled and password
protected access to said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 149. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- 6'
- (1) a local area network;
 - (2) a wide area network;
 - (3) a cable system;
 - (4) an internet communication system; and
 - 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

150. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may
be accessed through the Internet.

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5 151. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that
are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture and as satisfying one of
the following additional conditions:

10
B' 15 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic
delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture
economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of
scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic
delivery area;

(2) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to
minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

20 152. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 147
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

25 153. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
personal use.

5 154. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
further comprising:

(l) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and


B' 15 (m) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order
to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in
part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (n) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the
freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 155. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted
intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at
least a product specification, quantities available, projected delivery date, and
region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

5 156. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,
wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- 10 (4) a processed commodity.

 157. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which
are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at
15 a plurality of consumption locations, and wherein said articles of manufacture are
manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation
sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which
are located at a plurality of consumption locations.


20 158. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

- (i) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones
to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said
25 plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account
changes in said commercial risk, cost, opportunity as said pricing milestones
are experienced, wherein said series of different, discrete prices provide a
corresponding incrementally changes in price to encourage and reward time
commercial commitments.

30 159. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to

5 identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

160. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,
10 receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

 161. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits,
15 receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

162. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in
20 making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

163. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 162, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said
25 proposed articles of manufacture.

- 5 164. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 162, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

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5 165. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

B' (1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

20 (2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

(d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

30 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate

5 price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

10 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and


15 (g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area.

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5 166. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,
wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass
presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 167. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

 168. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which
may be accessed through the Internet.

20 169. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are
25 organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery
area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed
costs.

5 170. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 165
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or
10 delivery components of landed costs.

171. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
15 personal use.

B' 172. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165
further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

20 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and


(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

25 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to
make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part
through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

30 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the
freight or delivery component of landed costs.

5 173. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of
article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities
available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

10 174. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165,
wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery
from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential
purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational
15 constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight
haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

 20 175. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or
consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from
said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption
locations.

176. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

25 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to
establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of
articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said
commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced,
wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally
30 changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

5 177. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

- 20
- (1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
 - (3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

25 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

30 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate

5 price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

10 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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5 179. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177,
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- 10 (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

15 180. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177,
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are
organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery
area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed
20 costs.

25 181. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 177
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or
delivery components of landed costs.

30 182. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for
personal use.


5 183. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177 further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

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 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

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(j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

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184. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities
30 available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

5 185. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 177,
wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery
from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential
purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational
constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight
10 haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

186. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 177,
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or
consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from
15 said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption
locations.

187. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 177,
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:
20 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to
establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of
articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said
commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced,
wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally
25 changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

188. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 177,
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of
30 cascading graphical user interfaces.

5 189. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 188, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

10 190. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 188, further comprising:

(h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers
15 in proposed articles of manufacture; and

(i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.

20 191. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 190, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 192. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 190, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

30 193. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 192, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided

5 to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

10 194. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 190, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically.

B'

5 195. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost, or opportunity:

- B'
- 20 (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;
(2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
(3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
(4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
(5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
(6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
25 (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
(8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
(9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture;

30 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing in price to encourage

5 and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

6' 15 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

20 (g) wherein said plurality of manufacturing entities shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in consolidation, packaging and container loading inside said sufficiently small geographic area.

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196. (Cancelled)